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1 II. Amendment to the Claims.

2 1. (Withdrawn) A continuous process for producing charcoal from biomass input
3 material in which the production of charcoal is maximized and the consumption of
4 charcoal is minimized, the process comprising the steps of:

5 a. establishing a charcoal production bed having a biomass upper layer having a
6 top and a charcoal lower layer having a lower layer top; an intermediate layer pyrolysis
7 zone positioned between the upper layer and the lower layer; the charcoal production bed
8 positioned in a single reaction chamber;

9 b. igniting the lower layer top with ignition means;

10 establishing a pyrolysis zone at the intermediate layer;

11 c. moving oxygen-containing gas downwardly through the charcoal production
12 bed to sustain the pyrolysis reaction in the intermediate layer and to maintain the
13 temperature of the charcoal in the lower layer, wherein the pyrolysis volatiles from the
14 intermediate layer move downwardly through the hot charcoal in the lower layer,
15 resulting in tar-free fuel gas, which exits from the outlet means, and;

16 d. removing, by removing means, charcoal in the lower layer; regulating the
17 introduction of additional biomass material so that as charcoal is removed, the level of
18 charcoal comprising the lower layer, and hence the level of the pyrolysis zone comprising
19 the intermediate layer, remain substantially constant within the reaction chamber.

20

21 2. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 1, wherein:

22 a. maintaining the lower layer at a temperature which is sufficiently high to
23 reduce any tars from the pyrolysis zone intermediate layer to carbon monoxide, hydrogen;
24 b. providing the charcoal production bed with an outlet means for fuel gas;
25 regulating the additional biomass material by regulating at least the quantity and or the

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1 moisture content of the additional biomass material.

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3 (Withdrawn) The process of claim 2, including the step of monitoring the level of the
4 pyrolysis zone in the reaction chamber.

5

6 4. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 3 wherein the monitoring of the level of the
7 pyrolysis zone in the reaction chamber is by thermocouple means.

8

9 5.(Withdrawn) The process of claim 2, including the step of removing the fuel gas from
10 the reaction chamber.

11

12 6.(Withdrawn) The process of claim 1, wherein the temperature of the pyrolysis reaction
13 zone is in the range of 800.degree. C.-1000.degree.

14

15 7.(Withdrawn) The process of claim 1, wherein the charcoal lower layer is substantially
16 devolatilized.

17

18 8.(Withdrawn) The process of claim 1, wherein the charcoal lower layer is substantially
19 uniform in size.

20

21 9. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 2, wherein:

22 a. establishing the charcoal production bed is commenced by adding a charge of
23 charcoal at the lower layer of the reaction chamber.

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25 10. (Cancelled)

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1 11. (Cancelled)

2 12. (Cancelled)

3 13. (Cancelled)

4 14. (Cancelled)

5 15. (Cancelled)

6 16. (Cancelled)

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8 17. (Cancelled)

9 18. (Cancelled)

10 19. (Cancelled)

11 20. (Cancelled)

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13 21. (Cancelled)

14 22. (Cancelled)

15 23. (Cancelled)

16 24. (Cancelled)

17 25. (Cancelled)

18 26. (Currently amended) An apparatus to produce fuel gas from biomass, comprising:
19 a single reaction chamber comprising a charcoal production bed and a delivery
20 means wherein said delivery means is functionally connected to a source of raw,
21 unprocessed biomass; and further wherein said charcoal bed comprises three vertically
22 identifiable layers – an uppermost layer of raw, unprocessed biomass; an intermediate
23 layer comprising a pyrolysis zone; and a lowermost layer of charcoal, said charcoal
24 comprising spent biomass;

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1 a charcoal removal system comprising a mechanical conveyance means,
2 comprising an independent motor and temperature-activated control mean, functionally
3 connected to said single reaction chamber;

4 said apparatus to produce fuel gas from biomass further comprising a filter
5 wherein said filter is functionally and physically connected to said single reaction
6 chamber by pipe gas exit means, and said filter further being functionally connected to a
7 heat exchanger by pipes, said heat exchanger comprising a heat exchanger tank, a coolant
8 fluid, coolant fluid inlet and a coolant fluid discharge, wherein, said heat exchanger
9 discharge physically joins said heat exchanger tank to a demister element, said demister
10 element comprising a demister tank and demister input, said demister input comprising at
11 least one tube and a condensate drain, and further comprising a demister element output
12 pipe, said demister element output pipe being functionally and physically connected to a
13 fuel conditioner element;

14 said fuel conditioner element comprising a tank element, a bubble forming
15 element positioned near the bottom of said tank element, a fuel fluid, and a fuel
16 conditioning means discharge pipe;

17 and, said apparatus to produce fuel gas from biomass further comprising a pump
18 means positioned on said apparatus to produce fuel gas from biomass, such that the flow
19 of air is vertically downward from the top of said reaction chamber with a controlled flow
20 volume and such that said pump generates a pressure differential so that fuel gas flows
21 from said intermediate layer through said filter, said heat exchanger means, said demister,
22 and said fuel conditioner to said initial storage point;

23
24 the said coolant fluid from the group of water, a mixture of water and any
25 antifreeze fluid and a mixture of water and an alcohol.

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The [the] apparatus to [re] produce fuel gas from biomass of claim 22 wherein a [said] fuel means is diesel fuel.

27. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim 26 further comprising:
the apparatus to produce fuel gas from biomass of claim 22 wherein
said fuel means is any combustible vegetable oil;
the fuel fluid is from the group consisting of diesel fuel, combustible vegetable oil
and combustible liquid fossil fuel.

11 || 28. (Cancelled)

13 Claim 29 (New) An apparatus for the production of fuel gas and charcoal
14 comprising:

15 a generally cylindrical reaction chamber (30) having an open top and containing a
16 production bed (10), said production bed (10) comprising an upper layer (13) containing
17 biomass input material, an intermediate layer (14) containing biomass that has been
18 reduced to char and fuel gas (44) by pyrolysis, and a lower layer (15) containing biomass
19 that has been further reduced to charcoal;

a delivery means (16) for supplying biomass to the upper layer (13) of the production bed (10);

a removal means (45) for removing charcoal from the lower layer (15) of the production bed (10);

24 a light detection means (22) mounted at the top (31) of the reaction chamber (30)
25 for detecting the presence of biomass in the reaction chamber (30) and for signaling the

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1 supply of additional biomass to the upper layer (13) of the production bed (10) via said
2 delivery means (16);

3 a temperature sensing means comprising at least one thermocouple positioned
4 within the reaction chamber (30) for sensing the temperature of the production bed (10),
5 said temperature sensing means further signaling the supply of additional biomass to the
6 upper layer (13) of the production bed (10) via said delivery means (16) and the removal
7 of charcoal from the lower layer (15) of the production bed (10) via said removal means
8 (45);

9 an outlet means (43) for removing fuel gas (44) from the reaction chamber (30),
10 said outlet means (43) being located on the reaction chamber (30) adjacent to the
11 intermediate layer (14) of the production bed (10), said outlet means (43) being connected
12 to a pump (42) for drawing atmospheric air through the open top of the reaction chamber
13 (30), through the production bed (10), and into the outlet means (43);

14 a heat exchanger means (60) connected to said outlet means (43), said heat
15 exchanger means (60) comprising a heat exchanger tank containing a water or coolant
16 reservoir (65) for cooling the fuel gas (44), and said tank further comprising a heat
17 exchanger exhaust (71) for discharging the cooled fuel gas (44);

18 a demister means (80) connected to the heat exchanger exhaust (71), said demister
19 means (80) comprising a demister tank for collecting a condensate (83), at least one tube
20 (81) for directing the cooled fuel gas (44) from the heat exchanger exhaust (71) into the
21 demister tank, and a demister exhaust (82) for discharging the demisted and cooled fuel
22 gas (44) from the demister tank;

23 a fuel conditioner means (100) connected to the demister exhaust (82), said fuel
24 conditioner means (100) comprising a fuel conditioner tank containing a fuel means
25 (120), a bubble forming means (115) for bubbling the demisted and cooled fuel gas (44)

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1 from the demister exhaust (82) into the fuel means (120), and a fuel conditioner exhaust
2 for discharging the conditioned, demisted and cooled fuel gas (44) to a pump means
3 (140);

4 and a storage or engine means (160) connected to the fuel conditioner exhaust via
5 said pump means (140) for collecting or combusting the conditioned, demisted and
6 cooled fuel gas (44).

7

8 Claim 30 (New) The apparatus of claim 29, wherein,
9 the heat exchanger tank comprises a water or coolant inlet (67) and a water or
10 coolant outlet (69), and the fuel gas (44) is bubbled through the water or coolant reservoir
11 (65) and exhausted from the heat exchanger tank through the heat exchanger exhaust
12 (71);

13 the at least one tube (81) of the demister means (80) extends downwardly toward
14 the condensate (83) in a demister tank;

15 the bubble forming means (115) of the fuel conditioner means (100) is submerged
16 beneath the surface of the fuel means (120) in the fuel conditioner tank, said bubble
17 forming means comprising a pipe or tube means (110) that extends through a grid (116)
18 formed of a wire mesh or plate containing at least one aperture (117);

19 the delivery means (16) comprises at least one device selected from the group
20 consisting of hoppers, conveyors and augers;

21 the light detection means (22) comprises an electric eye, wherein the electric eye
22 provides a switch function that electrically communicates with a motor drive for the
23 delivery means (16), the motor drive being powered during a detected absence of biomass
24 in the reaction chamber (30); and

25 the temperature sensing means comprises at least one thermocouple located at the

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1 upper layer (13) of the production bed (10).

2

3 Claim 31 (New) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein,
4 the heat exchanger means (60) further comprises a supplemental heat exchanger
5 means (62) positioned within the heat exchanger tank and in fluid contact with the water
6 or coolant reservoir (65);

7 the at least one tube (81) of the demister means (80) comprises a plurality of
8 tubes, the demister means (80) further comprising a condensate drain means (84)
9 comprising a valve and piping means for discharging the condensate (83) into a reservoir;
10 and the delivery means (16) comprises a motor controlled auger.

11

12 Claim 32 (New) The apparatus of claim 31, further comprising:
13 valve means for controlling the supply of water or coolant to the inlet (67) and the
14 discharge of water or coolant from the outlet (69);

15 wherein,

16 the supplemental heat exchanger means (62) comprises a tube heat exchanger; the
17 fuel means (120) comprises at least one combustible substance selected from the group
18 consisting of diesel, peanut oil and vegetable oil; and

19 the temperature sensing means comprises three thermocouples positioned
20 respectively in the upper layer (13) of the production bed (10), the intermediate layer (14)
21 of the production bed (10), and at the delivery means (16).

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23 Claim 33 (New) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein,

24 the conditioned, demisted and cooled fuel gas (44) is introduced directly into the
25 intake manifold of the engine means (160);

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the removal means (45) comprises a device selected from the group consisting of
an auger, a valve controlled chute and a screw drive; and

the thermocouple positioned in the intermediate layer (14) of the production bed
signals the removal means (45) to move the intermediate layer (14) of the production
bed down the reaction chamber (30); the thermocouple positioned in the upper layer (13)
of the production bed (10) signals the safety shutdown of pump (42); and the
thermocouple positioned at the delivery means (16) signals additional safety control of
pump (42).

10 Claim 34 (New) The apparatus of claim 30, further comprising:

11 a reservoir collecting the water or coolant discharged from the heat exchanger
12 means (60) via the water or coolant outlet (69) for subsequent agricultural use;
13 wherein.

14 the removal means (45) comprises a device selected from the group consisting of
15 an auger, a valve controlled chute, a screw device and a lift or moving device, the
16 removal means (45) further comprising a conveyance or routing means (34) and a
17 charcoal storage means (36); and

18 the reaction chamber (30) is composed of heat and corrosion resistant materials
19 including fiberceramic insulation and/or a stainless steel liner.

21 Claim 35 (New) The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

22 a funnel means (200) positioned at the top of the reaction chamber (30) for
23 directing biomass to the center of the upper layer (12) of the production bed (10); and
24 a charcoal discharge funnel means (230) positioned between the lower layer (15)
25 of the production bed (10) and the removal means (45), for directing charcoal away from

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1 the walls of the reaction chamber (30) and toward the removal means (45);
2 wherein the funnel means (200) and the charcoal discharge funnel means (230) are
3 sloped, relative to vertical, at an angle greater than approximately 45 degrees.

4

5 Claim 36 (New) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein,
6 the funnel means (200) and the charcoal discharge funnel means (230) are sloped,
7 relative to vertical, at an angle of approximately 60 degrees; and
8 the removal means (45) comprises a device selected from the group consisting of
9 an auger, a valve controlled chute, a screw drive and a lift or moving device, said removal
10 means (45) further comprising conveyance or routing means (34) and a charcoal storage
11 means (36).

12

13 Claim 37 (New) The apparatus of claim 31, further comprising:
14 a charcoal collection means (41) and a charcoal heat exchanger means (260)
15 comprising at least one tube (262) that penetrates the wall (42) of the charcoal collection
16 means (41) via a plurality of heat exchanger ports (264);
17 wherein,
18 the uppermost portion of the reaction chamber (30) is slightly flared to
19 accommodate a head of the biomass; and
20 the reaction chamber (30) is composed of heat and corrosion resistant materials
21 including fiber ceramic insulation and/or a stainless steel liner.

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